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DOMENICI: SENATE APPROVES \$3.5 MILLION FOR HANTAVIRUS RESEARCH & EDUCATION

WASHINGTON -- Senator Pete Domenici today reported that the Senate has approved a key funding bill that includes \$3.5 million he sought to combat Hantavirus, the deadly disease that has long-plagued New Mexico.

Domenici, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said the Senate today approved the FY 2001 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Bill, which includes funding to conduct Hantavirus research and public awareness projects nationwide. The measure will next be considered by a conference committee set to reconcile differences between Senate and House versions of the bill.

The Senate also approved report language requested by Domenici strongly encouraging the Centers for Disease Control to use a portion of the funding to educate the public and medical personnel on the prevention of the disease.

"The state of New Mexico again experienced several cases of Hantavirus this past year, and the disease remains a deadly threat to public health," Domenici said. "New Mexico has more cases of Hantavirus than any other state, and a significant proportion of these cases strike American Indians."

Working with the Navajo Division of Health and the Indian Health Service, the New Mexico Department of Health has developed a proposal to educate the public and medical personnel on the prevention of the deadly Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. The cost of the proposed project is \$761,000 and would be implemented by the Navajo Division of Health which treats the most at-risk population (\$701,000) in cooperation with the Department of Health (\$60,000).

Since the outbreak in 1993 in the Four Corners area, there have been 48 Hantavirus cases in New Mexico alone, with 23 of them being fatal. A new case in New Mexico was just diagnosed in April. New Mexico has more Hantavirus cases than any other state.

The Senate also approved the following funding, endorsed by Domenici, of interest to northwest New Mexico:

- **\$10 million for Tribal Colleges**, an increase of \$4 million above 2000 and \$1 million over the president's request;
- **\$5.6 million for Tribally-Controlled Post-Secondary Vocational Institutions**, an increase of \$1 million. This includes the Crownpoint Institute of Technology (CIT) .
- **\$115.5 million for Indian Education Programs**, an increase of \$38.5 million above 2000. This includes \$92.8 million for grants to local education agencies (+ \$30.8 million), and \$20 million for special programs for Indian children (+ \$6.7 million), and \$2.7 million for national activities (+ \$1 million).